

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITY  
ANNOUNCEMENT**  
for

**Rockford REGROW Grants funded by the City of Rockford Cannabis Fund**

**Reinvest. Energize. Give. Restore Opportunity. Win.**

**Summary:**

The City of Rockford **invites you to apply for the 2022 Rockford REGROW Grant** funded by the Cannabis Fund. This is an equity-driving, restorative justice and community reinvestment grant program funded by the City of Rockford's 3% local tax on adult-use cannabis retail sales. The decades long "war-on-drugs" and related policies led to disparate cannabis-related arrests, convictions, and sentencing which have had long lasting legal, social, economic, and inter-generational consequences on communities of color. This fund aims to rectify some of these past harms and to reinvest in these communities directly.

In alignment with the City of Rockford Resolution 2021-7-R, the Rockford REGROW Grant Fund shall be used for

- programs for economic and business development; education; youth programming; job training; housing; health; or other financial assistance to individuals, businesses, and communities that have been disproportionately impacted by cannabis-related laws,
- programs to substantially reduce both the total amount of gun violence and concentrated poverty in the City of Rockford
- programs to protect communities from gun violence through targeted investments and intervention programs, including economic growth and improving family violence prevention, community trauma treatment rates, gun injury victim services, and public health prevention activities,
- programs to promote employment infrastructure and capacity building related to the social determinants of health in the eligible community areas,
- programs to address economic development, violence prevention services, zero entry and re-entry services, and youth development.

For the 2021 funding cycle, **\$400,000** is available for Rockford REGROW Grant Fund through the following funding opportunities:

- ONE (1) two-year grant at \$150,000 total per grant
- THREE (3) one-year grants at \$50,000 total per grant

- FIVE (5) quick deployment grants at \$10,000 per grant to support smaller, short-term projects to be completed in 2021
- \$50,000 for Future Projects TBD

The Rockford REGROW Fund seeks applications from non-profit and for-profit entities, of any size. Please note, newly formed groups or initiatives with fiscal sponsorship from a non-profit entity are also eligible to apply. Multi-entity collaborations, coalitions and/or consortium efforts are also encouraged to apply.

**Round 1 Applications must be submitted via email in WORD or PDF format by: Saturday, July 31, 2021 at 5PM CST**

**Submit applications and refer questions to:**  
REGROW@rockfordil.gov

## **SECTION A – GENERAL GRANT INFORMATION**

### **1. About Rockford REGROW Grant Cannabis Fund**

Racially-biased cannabis policies and disparate cannabis-related arrests, convictions, and sentencing have had long lasting legal, social, economic, and inter-generational consequences to Black and Brown communities. In 2020, an ongoing portion of the local cannabis tax revenue was allocated by the Rockford City Council to the Offices of Community & Economic Development and Health & Human Services to rectify some of these past harms and to reinvest in these communities directly.

The 2021 Rockford REGROW Grant Fund, the first year of the grant fund, will have **\$400,000** available in grants.

### **2. Rockford REGROW Grant Purpose**

The Rockford Regrow Grant Fund aims to aid, strengthen, and community reinvestment, and wealth creation communities suffering long-lasting negative consequences, and disproportionate impact of over 80 years of cannabis prohibition laws. Cannabis policies and disparate cannabis-related arrests, convictions, and sentencing have had life-altering and inter-generational consequences for these specific communities. The grant fund is one small step for the City in acknowledging and addressing the decades of harm caused to vulnerable communities by cannabis criminalization and stigmatization.

Moreover, intergenerational marginalization and community disinvestment are further continued by policies denying U.S. residency, child custody, voting rights, employment,

business loans, business licensing, student financial aid, public housing and other public assistance to people with criminal convictions.

The Rockford REGROW Grant Program will distribute funding across a range of projects, programs and services within and serving the designated priority areas. In accordance with the intent of Resolution 2021-7-R.

Projects, programs and services that demonstrate institutional policies and practices in equity, community partnerships, and economic development in communities most negatively impacted by cannabis prohibition will be prioritized. Projects proposed by applicants, and primarily serving, those directly impacted by the enforcement of marijuana laws, will receive highest priority.

### **3. Definitions**

“Disproportionately Impacted Community”: A census tract within the City of Rockford corporate limits determined by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to be eligible for the State of Illinois Cannabis Equity Program. A map of Disproportionately Impacted Communities can be viewed [here](#).

“Disproportionately impacted individual”: An individual who, prior January 13, 2021, was arrested for, convicted of, or adjudicated delinquent for any offense that is eligible for expungement under the Illinois Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act.

“Member of disproportionately impacted family”: An individual who has a parent, legal guardian, child, spouse, or dependent, or was a dependent of an individual who, prior to January 13, 2021, was arrested for, convicted of, or adjudicated delinquent for any offense that is eligible for expungement under the Illinois Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act.

The **Rockford REGROW Grant** seeks applications from non-profit and for-profit entities, of any size. This includes community-based organizations, individuals, firms, teams, or consultants. Please note, newly formed groups or initiatives with fiscal sponsorship from a non-profit entity are also eligible to apply. Multi-entity collaborations, coalitions and/or consortium efforts are also encouraged to apply. Applicants are encouraged to be innovative with existing services, explore new initiatives, or expand partnerships and clients served.

### **4. Grant funding**

For the 2021 funding cycle, **\$400,000** is available for the Rockford REGROW Grant Fund. The City of Rockford will return cannabis funds to the community through the following grants:

- THREE (3) one-time grants at \$50,000 total per grant
- ONE (1) two-year grants at \$150,000 total per grant (\$75,000 per year)
- FIVE (5) quick deployment one-time grants for short term projects or events, \$10,000 per grant

- \$50,000 for Future Projects TBD

**For 2021 Rockford REGROW Grant recipients, work is expected to start on January 1, 2022. Quick deployments grant projects must begin in the fall of 2021.**

Distribution of grant funds will be determined on a program by program basis and defined in the specific grant agreement.

## 5. Timeline for grant process

**Key dates for this grant opportunity are as follows:**

| <b>MILESTONE</b>  | <b>TIMELINE</b>             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| <b>Tier 1 Applications Available</b>                              | July 1, 2021                |
| Information session #1  | July 1, 2021                |
| <b>Tier 1 Applications due by 5PM CST</b>                         | <b>July 31, 2021</b>        |
| Recommendation to City Council for 2021 Quick Deployment Grantees | August 2021                 |
| Tier 2 Notifications sent by 5PM CST                              | August 17, 2021             |
| <i>Information session #3 (Round 2 applicants only)</i>           | <i>To Be Scheduled</i>      |
| <b>Tier 2/Final Applications due by 5PM CST*</b>                  | <b>October 9, 2021</b>      |
| Preliminary notification of committee recommendation to awardees  | End of October 2021         |
| Presentation to Council for Approval                              | November 2021               |
| <b><i>Public Announcement of 2021 recipients</i></b>              | <b><i>December 2021</i></b> |
| <b>Notice to proceed – work begins</b>                            | January 1, 2022             |

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*Please note those applicants selected to advance to Tier 2 will be notified via email on August 17, 2021 and will have seven (7) weeks to complete the Tier 2/final applications*

## **SECTION B – WORK REQUIREMENTS**

### **City Support for Grant Recipients**

The Cannabis Program will oversee all grant-funded projects/programs and all Rockford REGROW Grant recipients will be supported by the Rockford REGROW Technical Assistance Program.

### **Rockford REGROW Technical Assistance Program include:**

- Assigned REGROW Technical Assistance Program grant manager
- Administration and monitoring of the grant agreements for compliance with the  
City's administrative policies and procedures
- Coordinated and pre-scheduled quarterly Rockford REGROW Grant recipient cohort meetings
- Coordinated and pre-scheduled individualized monthly check-ins during Year 1
- Opportunities for free and/or low-cost additional business basics education
- Opportunities to network with, collaborate with, support and promote other Rockford REGROW Grant recipient work through existing program communication channels.

### **Deliverables and schedule**

Deliverables are work products and information that grantees must provide to the City such as reports, draft documents, data, interim findings, trainings, meeting presentations, etc. Rockford REGROW Grant Fund recipients are encouraged to provide deliverables via email, as appropriate.

**Rockford REGROW Grantee Deliverables shall include (but not limited to):**

- Monthly mini-progress reports aligned with pre-scheduled individualized check-in meetings
- One major progress report at the halfway point to account for the delivery of services, output measures, and any programmatic observations or highlights.
- An itemized account of expenditures submitted with each invoice for reimbursement.
- A final report to account for the delivery of services and output measures including:
  - Total number of participants and information about participants referred per project/program activity.
  - Aggregate data and analysis of confidential and voluntarily-contributed demographic information of service participants (demographics form will be provided).
  - List of email contacts for program participants for future program evaluation.
  - Other metrics defined by the Applicant(s) in their application.
  - All deliverables and resulting work products from this grant agreement will become the property of the City of Rockford.

### **Place of Activity**

The project/program work must benefit the City of Rockford community members and primarily be delivered within Rockford city limits.

### **Period of Activity**

- The expected project/program start date for the quick deployment grants is Fall, 2021
- The expected project/program start date for the one-time cycle is January 1, 2022 for a period of 12 months until December 31, 2022.
- The expected project/program start date for the two-year cycle is January 1, 2022 for a period of 24 months until December 31, 2023.

### **Allowable and Unallowable Costs for Rockford REGROW Grants**

Activities, efforts, and materials needed for the performance of the grant program/project are generally allowable costs for reimbursement. Costs accrued solely to promote or advance the awardee business or organization may not be eligible for reimbursement.

Unallowable costs include (but are not limited to): some political activities (for example, activities to promote a specific candidate); purchase of cannabis inventory; purchase of alcoholic beverages; purchase of real estate. **Please check with your assigned Rockford REGROW Technical Assistance manager if you have questions about a specific item in your proposed budget.**